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The Primary Source

Newsletter of the Society of Mississippi Archivists

Volume 1

September, 1979

Number 3

MISSISSIPPI AND THE NHPRC --- WHAT'S HAPPENING?

By Elbert Hilliard

State Historical Records Coordinator

Almost five years ago, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 93-536 transforming the existing National Historical Publications Commission into the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Unfortunately, Mississippi institutions only recently became eligible to participate in the NHPRC records grant program due to the state's failure to comply with the commission's guidelines requiring the establishment of a State Historical Records Advisory Board. In addition to the state advisory board, the commission specified that the governor of each state would be expected to appoint a State Historical Records Coordinator - thus creating a mechanism similar to that which has been used so effectively in administering the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Initially, it appeared that Mississippi would be one of the first states to qualify for participation in the records grant program. Dr. James B. Rhoads, Chairman of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and Archivist of the United States, wrote Governor William L. Waller on July 14, 1975, inviting the governor to appoint the advisory board and records coordinator for Mississippi. Four days later, the governor responded by naming the Board of Trustees of the Department of Archives and History and the writer to represent the state in these respective functions.

We were subsequently advised that the NHPRC could not approve the appointment of the board of trustees due to the fact that the commission guidelines specify that a majority of the members of the State Historical Records Advisory Board must be individuals of recognized professional qualifications and experience in the administration of historical records or in a field of research which makes extensive use of such records. The board of trustees, therefore, at its meeting on December 3, 1975, appointed nine professionals from various institutions throughout the state to a Historical Records Advisory Committee for Mississippi with the understanding that the committee would have complete responsibility for reviewing the records grant proposals that would be forwarded to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. On December 15, 1975, we were advised that NHPRC had adopted the following resolution concerning the board of trustees' action:

Resolved, that the recommendation for the State Historical Records Advisory Board for Mississippi proposed on behalf of the Governor of that State by the Governor's appointee as State Historical Records Coordinator is certified and approved contingent on written notice of the appointments by the Governor of Mississippi and with his assurance that the Advisory Board will have complete responsibility for implementing the NHPRC records grant program in Mississippi.

Shortly thereafter, we contacted Governor Waller requesting that he write NHPRC to advise the commission of his concurrence with the appointments of the board of trustees. Our written request and follow-up personal contacts were evidently lost in the governor's hectic schedule in closing out his administration.

(continued on p. 8)

FROM THE PRESIDENT

EVENTS

The response of the society's membership to The Primary Source has been highly favorable. With this issue it becomes a quarterly publication of the society. Acting Editor Ron Tomlin ably produced the first two issues. Hank Holmes of the Department of Archives and History has graciously consented to be the new managing editor. Hank is very enthusiastic about this position, and has developed several new ideas that he will be incorporating into the newsletter. He welcomes suggestions and contributions from members of the society.

Presently, the Society of Mississippi Archivists ranks third nationally among state and regional archival organizations in terms of membership. We solicit your support of the society, both in obtaining new members and in bringing your own dues up to date if you have not done so. A membership form is included in this issue and can be used for either new or renewal memberships.

Plans are being made to offer additional services to the members of the society. May I encourage each of you to assist me and the society by offering whatever suggestions or comments you may have about this newsletter or the work of the society in general.

--- Sammy Cranford

President Cranford has announced the following committee chairmen. Full committees will be announced in the next issue. Please feel free to share your ideas with these chairmen about their committee activities.

Program Committee

Paul Anderson

University of Southern Mississippi

Nominating Committee

Claude Fike

University of Southern Mississippi

Membership Committee

Betty Wood Thomas

Lowndes County Department of Archives and History

SAA Annual Meeting in Chicago, Ill.

The 43rd annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists will be held in Chicago September 24 - 28. Of especial interest to SMA members should be the day seminar "Archives: An Introduction" a course to introduce archival practice. Topics to be included are appraisal, acquisition, arrangement and description of records. The SAA program itself is varied in its approach - there is none for this year. There are more than thirty seminars, presentations and drop-in sessions a richness that will surely reward some members attending. For more information contact the SAA office at 330 S. Wells Suite 810, Chicago, Ill., 60606 or call (312) - 922 - 0140.

Preservation of Local History Awareness Conference

September 15, 1979

McCool Hall

Mississippi State University

Sponsored by the Council for Regional Studies, this conference is presented for area junior high and high school social studies teachers. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Alan Jabbour, Director, Folk Life Center, Library of Congress.

Mississippi Library Association

October 10-12

Coliseum Ramada Inn

Jackson

At its annual meeting, the MLA will be celebrating its 70th birthday. The program for the celebration will be "Information Society: Agenda for Change." Daniel Schorr, former CBS news correspondent, will be the keynote speaker.

"Librarians Communicate"

Workshops. Sponsored by the Education Committee, Mississippi Library Association. September 21, 1979

University of Southern Mississippi

October 10, 1979

MLA Preconference, Jackson

Consciousness-raising sessions and new techniques in verbal and non-verbal communication are presented in hopes of smoothing patron-staff ruffles. For more information, contact the committee at P.O. Box 4710, Jackson, 39216.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Society of Mississippi Archivists approaches the close of its 1978-79 membership year with 452 members, an increase of approximately thirty since the annual meeting in April. This membership total makes the society the largest state archival association in the country. A membership directory for the society will be distributed to the membership during the middle of September. At the back of this issue you will find a membership renewal form for the 1979-80 year. Please return this form with your check to cover membership dues to our treasurer, Ms. Anne S. Wells, P. O. Box 5408, Miss. State, MS 39762. We have plans for an expanded program during 1980 and we look forward to your continued support and participation in this organization dedicated to improving the archival profession in Mississippi.

At the August 30 meeting of the Executive Council a lively discussion of the program of the society took place. It was the opinion of the officers that a workshop held the day prior to the annual meeting might be well received. No definite plans were made for such a program, but it was decided to look into the possibility of including a pre-meeting session at the 1980 annual meeting.

Because of the size of our membership and its geographical variance, many of you have only a limited voice in the plans of the society. At the end of 1978, in an effort to solicit ideas from the membership at large, I sent out a questionnaire, and thus far only 18.4% have been returned. This questionnaire is important in helping us learn more about our membership and to plan the society's programs with your needs in mind. The questionnaire also enables us to double check our mailing list. If you still have an incompleated form, please take a few minutes to fill it out. If you need a form, let me know.

The society strives to be of benefit to its members. If you know of ways we can assist your local situations, let us know. As the society grows and develops, so too will the archival profession in Mississippi. I look forward to serving you during the upcoming membership year.

--- Ronald E. Tomlin

INFORMATION ABOUT MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission
Mrs. R. A. McLemore, Executive Secretary
Leland Speed Library, Mississippi College
P. O. Box 51
Clinton, Mississippi 39056

The Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission is a service offered to Mississippi Southern Baptist Churches. The commission offers to maintain a historical reference file on each church, microfilm church records at no charge, and provide fire-proof storage on a loan basis for church records. Research materials available include a fairly complete collection of associational minutes on each Mississippi association since the beginning in 1877; biographical files on outstanding Mississippi Baptists; church files; subject files about Baptists in Mississippi; and books related to the history of Mississippi Baptists.

Mississippi University for Women
Archives and Museum
Mrs. Gloria L. Atkinson, Archivist
Department of Archives and Museum
Mississippi University for Women
Columbus, Mississippi 39701

The MUW Archives and Museum was organized to preserve the university's heritage as a state-supported institution for women. A grant was awarded the university by the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Authority to secure an archivist and assist in the development of the archives & museum. The waterway authority also presented the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Collection of documents and artifacts. Other research material available includes correspondence, monographs, memos, books and records of many of the past presidents of the university, and the papers of Mrs. Annie C. Peyton, one of the "Founding Mothers" of the school. The museum, created in the early 1930s, will be permanently housed in the Old Chapel in Orr Building when restoration is complete.

NEWS AND NOTES

Department of Archives and History

Madel Morgan assumed the duties of Director, Archives and Library Division, on August 15. Mrs. Morgan is a former employee of the department, and for the last several years has served as Special Programs Consultant for the Mississippi Library Commission.

Work on a survey of the records of executive state agencies began July 1, 1979. The survey, scheduled to last a year, is funded by a grant from NHPRC and should result in a statistical summary of the records holdings of state executive agencies.

Dr. Patricia Galloway reports that revision of the typescript translation for the fourth and fifth volumes of the "Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion" is about complete. In addition to French archives, the fifth volume will contain a cumulative bibliography and other scholarly apparatus.

Significant acquisitions are reported in the following areas:

Official Records: Rough drafts of House bills, 1960-68, 17cf; records of the Joint Legislative Reapportionment Committee, 1977-79, 50cf; bonds and oaths of public officials, 1893-1915, 1½cf
Manuscripts: Sherwood Wise Collection, ½cf, containing an original wallpaper edition of the Daily Citizen, June 30, 1863

Special Collections: A New Map of the North Parts of America Claimed by France, H. Moll, 1720

Oral History: Eleven interviews with persons connected with the Tuberculosis Treatment Center at Sanitorium; interviews with Mary Anderson Stebly and her mother, Mrs. Walter Anderson, May 14-15, 1979; two interviews with Shelby Foote, August 16-17, 1979.

Lowndes County Dept. of Archives & History

Lightening struck the Lowndes County Courthouse clock tower on August 8 about 7:00 pm. Nearly 700 old books were stored in the tower. They were not damaged by the fire but were completely water-soaked.

Due to the fast and proper treatment of the books by the department staff, they were saved. The first action taken was to have the books moved to a dry, cool place, then newsprint paper was placed between

every four to six pages of each book. After 36 hours, some of the pages were only slightly damp. At that time, those books were placed in a press. As the books reached the same stage, they were placed in a press. The paper was changed in the books every 36 hours to insure proper drying of the pages. The books pages were cleaned by using brushes, of the sort used by barbers, to remove the dirt that had collected on the books. Some of the books have required a leather cover to complete the work. Work is continuing with the book cleaning.

Mississippi State University

Anne Wells reports the following additions:

D. Clayton James Collection. 21f. This addition consists of fifty-six oral history interviews (tapes and transcripts), focusing on the life of General Douglas MacArthur, the Japanese Occupation following World War II, and the Korean War. Among the interviewees were prominent U.S. and Japanese officials.

John C. Stennis Collection. 951f. This addition includes official correspondence, staff files, speeches, and photographs. Inclusive dates are 1947-1977.

On June 21, 1979, Mrs. Russell Long visited The Stennis Collection as part of her tour of prominent senatorial collections in the South.

Lynne Mueller, Special Collections Librarian, and Anne Wells attended the Copyright Workshop sponsored by the University of Southern Mississippi and the Mississippi Library Association, and held on the Miss. State University campus, July 11.

University of Southern Mississippi

These accessions for June-August, 1979, have been reported from the McCain Library:

Historical Manuscripts and Records: Ewing, Hugh Boyle, letter, 1863; Patrick A. J., letter, 1862; U. S. Army, First Brig., First Div., 16th Army Corps, letter, 1863; Hattiesburg Brick Works, Inc., records, 22ft., 1905-75; Pine Belt Savings & Loan Assoc., ms report, 1968; Westerman, William, signed document, 1863; Lenoir, Dorothy, genealogical records, 1856-1905 & 1961-68; Godman, Harry R., five letters, 1863-1873.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ARCHIVIST

The idea that an archivist must be some old fossil, who crones over ancient manuscripts like a miser over his gold is about as far from the true conception of what the archivist should be as an Italian garden on Como is from a collection of stunted pines on a barren hillside. The archivist should be an accomplished man of letters who has specialized in history, political science, law and archival science. He should be a man of affairs, with something of the politician in his make-up, for appropriations are necessary to his work, and he must deal with congresses and legislatures in order to make it a success. It goes without saying that he must love his work, and have the capacity to make others realize its importance. The archivist should be a combination of the scholar, the college professor, the lawyer, the politician and the business man, for no other profession calls for more various talents.

---Dunbar Rowland

THE EDITOR NOTES ---

This issue of The Primary Source represents a new experience for me. Never having served as editor of anything before, I accepted this job only after the Executive Council was made aware of my naivete. Perhaps it is appropriate to have a new editor for a new newsletter -- may we both grow well!

I attended the Executive Council meeting on August 30 not only to receive my appointment, but to seek ideas for the direction and make-up for The Primary Source. One of the temptations of a newsletter serving a society which produces no journal or other scholarly publication is to use the newsletter for such a purpose. Little time and money will help us resist that temptation, but we do want to provide the society with a publication that will be of use. Toward that end, you will find in this issue two short articles on preservation -- one about photographs and one on water-damaged papers. Though their scope is not intended to serve as a technical leaflet, we hope that they will provide some useful information.

As to future articles and notes, please let us know what you would like to read about. Time was especially short for the preparation of this issue, and help in producing it was called in from close at hand, namely the Department of Archives and History. Future issues, we hope, will make use of the

talents and experiences of society members across the state. Please consider this a solicitation for your contribution. Remember, the only way we can print information about your own archival program and experience is if you provide us with such.

You will also see elsewhere in this issue notes on the Society of American Archivists meeting in Chicago, September 26 - 28. The program looks to be a good one, and I would urge those that can, go. As one of the larger state and regional archival societies in the nation, the Society of Mississippi Archivists should have a good representation up there. For those of you considering the trip, here's a travel tip: Amtrak's version of The Panama Limited has a round-trip coach fare for under one hundred dollars.

With this issue, I hope that publication has gotten somewhat back on a quarterly schedule. I look forward to serving the society as editor of its newsletter.

--- hth

Mention of any commercial product or of any meeting or program does not constitute an endorsement of such by this newsletter. For more information concerning archival supplies, contact Ron Tomlin, SMA secretary.

THE CARE AND PRESERVATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

By JoAnn Blissard Bomar

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

During the past ten to fifteen years, the importance of the photograph as a historically significant document has suddenly taken on a new meaning. The significance of the photograph has always been there, but people as a whole, as well as those persons associated with archival agencies, have just recognized their value.

Along with the recognition of their value has come a new school of thought concerning the emergency of preserving our old and new photographs. Seminars are held regularly at Eastman in Rochester, New York, for the express purpose of enlightening collection curators on means of preserving their photographs.

A photograph collection may range through many different types of images, beginning with daguerreotypes in 1830 and progressing through various paper forms up to our present day photographs. Most collections will consist primarily of paper prints, so we will concentrate on those.

Many old photographs of this century and the last have lost intensity and clarity - they have faded. The best preservation for these is photographic copying. Thus we can be assured of retaining the image that is left. The old photograph should be saved, however, and mended with special archival tape - not scotch tape - and, if possible, the old photograph should be encapsulated in mylar. The picture can be mounted as well as encapsulated. If old mounting exists, remove the photograph from the old board and remount it on acid-free board. This also enhances the photograph. Cleaning of the photographs, if necessary should be done carefully with art cleaning gum.

Once the photographs are in safe condition, storage should be considered. Acid-free envelopes and folders can be obtained from the Hollinger Corporation. The envelopes and/or folders should then be stored in a metal cabinet.

Perhaps the most important element to remember for preservation of photographs is temperature and humidity control, plus exposure to light. Heat and light can completely obliterate an image. It is imperative to have a comparatively cool place (if not cold!) in which to store the photographs. The storage facilities will protect them from light. Humidity control should be considered if possible.

And don't forget the negatives! They should also be stored in acid-free envelopes and placed in a metal cabinet. Their call numbers should be the same as those for the pictures. Beware of nitrate negatives which were used up until 1940. They were replaced by safety film, which does not have the combustible nature of the nitrates. Replace the nitrates with new negatives and discard the old, dangerous negatives.

Identification of old photographs is always a problem. Do the best you can with the old ones: consult older persons, take note of clothing and automobile makes for dating. The identification should be written on the back clearly with a dry ball point pen, soft pencil or grease pencil. The new photographs coming into the collection are easy to identify - just be sure you do it on the spot immediately!

***** SEMINAR ON PHOTOGRAPHIC PRESERVATION

"Preservation and Restoration of Photographic Images" March 3-5, 1980

Rochester Institute of Technology
College of Graphic Arts & Photography
Graphic Arts Research Center
One Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, New York 14623

The Hollinger Corporation
P. O. Box 6185
Arlington, Virginia 22206

THE EASTER FLOOD AND SALVATION WORK

By William Hanna

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

In mid-April of this year, the archival staff of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History faced the messy problems associated with the receding water of the Pearl River in the Jackson area. Although the archives building remained high above the flood crest, many state agencies, businesses and private homes that were on a lower elevation filled with water. When people returned to their offices and homes, they found piles of water-soaked records and books, many caked with layers of mud.

Our staff, dealing with such an emergency for the first time, undertook the role of advising victims and, in one case, salvaging a collection of WPA material of 150 cubic feet that had been under six feet of water for four days. Before we assumed the role of advisor, much research was done, and advice was taken from those who had undergone similar experiences. We encountered several types of salvage methods, ranging from the use of complex vacuum chambers and freeze drying operations to simple efforts such as interleaving. Since most of the inquiries would come from people who had no electricity in their homes or only a small amount of papers to salvage, we opted for the less complex method. In retrospect, it seems to have served well.

The interleaving method is time consuming but does not require sophisticated equipment which is difficult to obtain on short notice. We used this method when the archival staff salvaged the large collection of WPA material that was stored in the Natural Science Museum in Jackson.

The collection had been stored in cardboard files in a closet on the first floor of the Natural Science Museum, stacked on the floor about eight feet high. Although the upper two feet of the stacks were not submerged, the water seeped up the cardboard files and saturated the contents of almost every file above the water line.

Our first action was the removal of the file cabinets from the closet and then spreading them on the floor. Many of the cardboard files were falling apart, and our first priority was keeping the files in their original order with the file drawer identifications.

All of the material was removed from the flood area to a large air-conditioned Game and Fish Commission building near Canton. A number was assigned to each file drawer, and the folders of each drawer were spread out on the floor on top of unprinted newsprint. Each folder was interleaved with paper towels and the unprinted newsprint, carefully placing the paper between the wet sections. Large fans were set up in the room to keep the air circulating, and the thermostat was set at 65 degrees. In addition to speeding the drying process, this action helped retard the growth of mold on the paper. The files were kept in this building for several days and then brought to the archives building. Immediately upon their arrival, they were fumigated for twenty-four hours, and once again spread out, as they were not yet completely dry. Within a week after their arrival, they were once again usable.

Of the nearly 150 cubic feet of material that was flooded, all but one or two cubic feet was salvaged. Some photographs, water-color drawings, and some carbon copies of correspondence that had been wet too long and damaged by the weight of other files on top were beyond salvation. In most cases, however, our methods were successful. Even some photographs were saved after the emulsion had started coming off of the paper.

In the beginning our biggest fear had been mold. We knew that wet paper is highly subject to mold damage (especially in this humid area of the country) if it is not dried within forty-eight hours after it is removed from the water. We were far behind schedule when we began the salvage operation. The task of moving the voluminous material to the air conditioned building thirty miles away must have been worthwhile, because

SALVATION, cont.

with the fans used to circulate the air and the 65 degree temperature in the building, mold growth was held to a minimum. After five months, there is very little evidence of mold damage to the papers.

The collection took much longer to dry than we had anticipated, but this was doubtless due to the large amount of materials we were trying to salvage with the help of only a few people. After advising several offices at the State Board of Health on methods of salvaging their files, they were able to save all important material within two days. They used the same interleaving process, but worked with a smaller amount of material. It seems that the more often interleaves are changed, the faster a set of wet papers will dry.

Perhaps the most important lesson we learned from the flood was the need for all archivists to be prepared to meet such an emergency. Although your repository may be high above the flood plain, leaky water pipes and ceilings, and fires (in repositories water damage usually accounts for the greatest damage during fires) can always occur. There is also a need for knowledge of salvage methods so archivists can advise people who may be subject to such a disaster. As this paper was being written, we were called by another state agency whose library had suffered water damage from a broken water pipe.

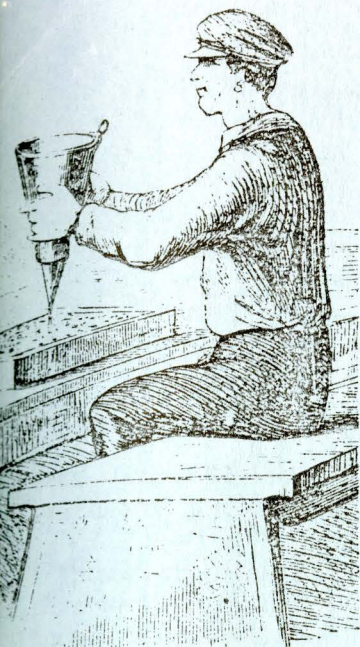
There are several sources for information on salvage of water damaged archival and library materials.¹ It would be wise for all archivists to be familiar with these procedures. The archival staff of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History will be glad to advise anyone who has water-damaged records. We will also be prepared for the next time Louisville, Mississippi has twenty inches of rain in one day.

NHPRC, cont.

What followed was a fruitless 2½ year effort to secure the confirmation of the advisory board by Governor Finch, who evidently determined that the program was not a high priority for Mississippi. We wrote letters to the governor and to practically all of his administrative assistants. Innumerable telephone calls were made; and, on one occasion, we even made it so far as to secure a conference with the governor's aide who handled appointments. In the meantime, the NHPRC was advising grant applicants that it could not consider proposals for grants for projects in Mississippi until such a time as the State Historical Records Advisory Board was officially confirmed. Copies of these responses from NHPRC were forwarded to the governor's office to no avail.

On November 11, 1977, Dr Rhoads advised Governor Finch that 47 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands had qualified for participation in the records program, and he expressed hope that the governor would "soon be able to take the necessary action to enable Mississippi to join" the program. Other individuals, including Dr. William D. McCain, President Emeritus, University of Southern Mississippi and the third director of the Department of Archives and History, agreed to assist us in our efforts to secure the appointment of the advisory board. Messages were delivered to the effect that the names approved by the board of trustees were not required and that the governor could appoint anyone he wanted to just so long as the individuals met the requirements established by NHPRC. All of these efforts were for naught as no action was forthcoming. Finally, the NHPRC announced that, as of July 1, 1978, grant proposals from the three states that had not finalized the appointments of the state advisory board could be transmitted directly to the commission for action. Under this procedure, NHPRC has awarded grants of \$30,932 to the Department of Archives and History for a survey of records in executive agencies and departments in the government of the state of Mississippi and \$11,210 to the University of Mississippi for its lumber archives project and an evaluation of the university's overall archival program.

1. In our research on salvage methods we relied heavily on Procedures for Salvage of Water Damaged Library Materials by Peter Waters, Library of Congress, Washington, 1975. The AASLH has published a valuable bibliography in Technical Leaflet #114.



"...no other profession calls for more various talents."

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

1979 - 1980 Membership Year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NO. _____

Annual dues are \$5. Please make checks payable to The Society of Mississippi Archivists and send the form and money to Anne S. Wells, Treasurer, Society of Mississippi Archivists, P.O. Box 5408, Mississippi State, MS 39762. The membership year runs from October 1 to September 30.